

Message Text

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THE SOVIET MOVE IN ABANDONING THE TRADE AGREEMENT WAS VIEWED WITH SUSPICION IN AN EDITORIAL IN THE DAILY TIMES.

1. "DETENTE COULD WELL BE IN THE BALANCE FOLLOWING THE SOVIET UNION'S REJECTION OF A VALUABLE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES, AND URGENT ACTION IS CALLED FOR TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION.

FROM THE DISCLOSURE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE, DR. HENRY KISSINGER, THAT MOSCOW HAD REJECTED FAVOURABLE TARIFF OF U.S. DEMANDS THAT, IN RETURN, JEWS AND OTHER MINORITIES BE ALLOWED TO EMIGRATE FREELY, IT APPEARS THAT THE SOVIET MOVE IS AIMED AT QUASHING THE IDEA THAT TOUGHNESS PAYS OFF IN DEALING WITH THE RUSSIANS."

2. "THIS REJECTION IS AN EYE-OPENER AND FROM NOW ON ANY ASSURANCES GIVEN BY THE RUSSIANS ARE AS GOOD AS USELESS. NOW, DOUBT IS CAST ON THE PLIGHT OF THE ESTIMATED 200,000 SOVIET JEWS WHO ARE DYING TO LEAVE RUSSIA.

TO THE RUSSIANS THE U.S. OFFER OF MOST-FAVOURED-NATION TARIFF STATUS SEEMS TO BE DISPENSABLE, AND KREMLIN, BY SPARING ITSELF THE REQUIREMENT OF REPAYING SOME 700 MILLION DOLLARS IN FULL SETTLEMENT OF THE 21,000 MILLION DOLLARS DEBT TO THE UNITED STATES BECAUSE OF THE WORLD WAR TWO LEND LEASE PROGRAMME, HAS MADE IT CLEAR IT IS PREPARED TO COMPLY WITH BILATERAL AGREEMENTS ONLY WHEN THESE PROMOTE ITS OWN INTERESTS."

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3. "BUT MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, IT IS TRYING TO UNDERMINE THE IDEA - PUT FORTH BY SENATOR HENRY JACKSON, A WASHINGTON DEMOCRAT - THAT MOSCOW WILL BEND UNDER STRONG NEGOTIATING PRESSURE.

SENATOR JACKSON, IT IS UNDERSTOOD, HAD BEEN THE MAIN FORCE INSISTING THAT RUSSIA EASE ITS EMIGRATION LAWS IN RETURN FOR THE TARIFF CONCESSIONS. SINCE OCTOBER 18, WHEN DR. KISSINGER REPORTED THAT MOSCOW HAD AGREED TO ALLOW MORE JEWS TO EMIGRATE, HE HAS BEEN PUBLICLY PROCLAIMING THAT HIS POLICY OF TOUGHNESS WORKS."

4. "IN AN INTERVIEW LAST MONTH, HE SAID THE APPARENT SOVIET CONCESSION ON JEWISH EMIGRATION MEANT THAT RUSSIA WOULD ALSO YIELD TO PRESSURE IN OTHER AREAS, SPECIFICALLY NUCLEAR ARMS LIMITATION.

WITH SENATOR JACKSON THE LIKELIEST DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE IN THE 1976 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, THE RUSSIANS WERE FACED WITH A DILEMMA - EITHER AGREEING TO THE TRADE DEAL AND PROVING SENATOR JACKSON RIGHT, WITH THE PROSPECT THAT THIS MIGHT HELP HIM BECOME PRESIDENT FOR FOUR TO EIGHT YEARS, OR TURNING THE ENTIRE DEAL DOWN."

5. "FOR DR. KISSINGER PERSONALLY, THE SOVIET REJECTION MUST HAVE BEEN A BITTER BLOW, ALTHOUGH NOT AN UNEXPECTED ONE. HE HAD WARNED THAT RUSSIA, AS A SOVEREIGN NATION, WOULD REGARD THE EMIGRATION REQUIREMENTS AS AN UNACCEPTABLE INTERFERENCE IN ITS FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

BUT DR. KISSINGER HAS BEEN THE MAIN PROPONENT OF WHAT HAS COME TO BE TERMED THE "LINKAGE" THEORY - THZLRSA THAT PROGRESS IN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT MUST BE LINKED TO PROGRESS IN TRADE AND OTHER PEACEFUL AREAS."

6. "HE TOLD THE NEW CONFERENCE THAT HE HAD NO EVIDENCE THAT THE SOVIET REJECTION OF THE TRADE OFFER MEANT THAT MOSCOW WOULD NOW BE TOUGH IN OTHER AREAS AS WELL.

MOST PEOPLE, INCLUDING OURSELVES, FEEL THERE IS NOTHING TO STOP THE RUSSIANS FROM EXTENDING THIS UNFRIENDLY ATTITUDE TO OTHER FIELDS AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE KREMLIN WILL HEED DR. KISSINGER'S WARNING THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD RESIST ATTEMPTS TO APPLY PRESSURE IN OTHER FIELDS OR AREAS OF THE WORLD.

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ALTHOUGH THE RUSSIANS HAVE REPORTEDLY TOLD HIM THAT THEY REGARD THE TRADE BILL AS AN ISOLATED CASE, AND NEGOTIATIONS ON STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS ARE STILL SCHEDULED TO RESUME IN GENEVA ON JANUARY 31, AND SOVIET PARTY LEADER LEONID BREZHNEV IS STILL EXPECTED IN WASHINGTON IN MAY OR JUNE, WE FEEL THEY CANNOT BE TRUSTED.

BESIDES BEING COSTLY FOR THEM AND FOR U.S. BUSINESS, THEIR

REJECTION OF THE TRADE OFFER IS A BIG BLOW TO DETENTE."

PFENDER

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